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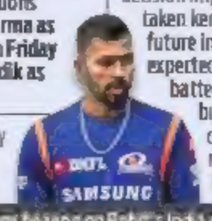
HARDIK TO LEAD MI, ROHIT MAY CONTINUE AS INDIA T20I CAPTAIN

2025 AUCTION KEY

Ever since Hardik Pandya was traded to Mumbai Indians from Gujarat Titans, speculations were rife over the future of Rohit Sharma as captain of the team. The franchise on Friday put an end to that by appointing Hardik as the skipper for 2024 season

Touted as the future leader, especially the white ball cricket, Hardik has led India in 16 T20Is so far | P17



With Rohit (36) not getting any younger, the decision might have been taken keeping the future in mind. He is expected to play as a batter this season but that may change during mega auction in 2025

The move, however, is unlikely to have any bearing on Rohit's India captaincy. As of now, he is expected to lead the team in T20 World Cup scheduled in June 2024 but there is no denying that equations may change depending on his show in IPL

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Drought: Commodity prices to see steep hike

ASHWINI M SRIPAD @ Bengaluru

DROUGHT has affected various crops across the State, leading to a steep increase in the prices of essential commodities.

Karnataka received 633mm of rain from June to September (southwest monsoon) as against the normal of 839mm. From October to the second week of December (northeast monsoon), the State received 113mm rain as against the normal of 188 mm for the period.

The State is facing a deficit, although it received some rain in the past few days. Of the 31 districts, 24 are facing deficit.

Sources in the Agriculture Department told The New Indian Express that this year, they expected 148 lakh MT of foodgrains. But due to drought, it is expected to come down by 60 lakh MT. Sowing was not done in many parts of the State. Wherever sowing was done, crops withered or the harvest was poor.

"This means, when there is less production, the demand for foodgrains will increase and prices go up naturally," they said.

An officer said tur dal, which was sold for Rs 7,000 a quintal, now costs Rs 12,000 and the price is expected to increase further. "The common man, who used to buy tur dal for Rs 70 a kg, will have to pay Rs 120. Similarly, the price of urad dal has increased from Rs 85 a kg to Rs 130. The prices of other essential commodities are expected to see a steep increase in the coming days" he said. P4

EXPRESS READ

Undertrial prisoner shot dead on court premises in Bihar

PATNA: An undertrial prisoner, accused of murder, was shot dead by two miscreants on Friday while being taken to a trial court in Bihar's Danapur, police said. The deceased has been identified as Abhishek Singh. The accused are being grilled | P10

EXPRESS INTAKE

Siddaramaiah announces loan interest waiver to farmers | P4

Talk of untouchability, ₹500 a haircut for Dalits in this Dharwad village! | P4

Improving financial condition a challenge for government, says TS Guv | P5

BJP MLA gets 25-yr jail term in UP rape case

NAMITA BAJPAI @ Lucknow

SETTING the stage for the disqualification of Uttar Pradesh BJP MLA Ramdular Gond, the MP-MLA court in Sonbhadra on Friday sentenced him to 25 years of rigorous imprisonment for the rape of a minor girl nine years ago. Additional district judge (first) Ahsanullah Khan also imposed a fine of ₹10.05 lakh on Gond. "The court directed the entire amount be given to the victim," said Special Public Prosecutor (Sonbhadra) Satya Prakash Tripathi.

The court had on December 12 held the first-time MLA from the ST-reserved Duddhi constituency guilty in the rape case dating back to 2014.

Gond's lawyer said they would challenge the judgment.

Plotters had backup plan for demo outside House

Intruders had with them pics of a fist in the backdrop of the Tricolour

UJWAL JALALI & BALA CHAUHAN
@ New Delhi/ Bengaluru

THE alleged mastermind behind Wednesday's Parliament security breach revealed to the police that their team had a 'Plan B' in case their two accomplices were unable to reach Parliament for a protest for whatever reason.

As per Plan B, two others were to approach the building from another direction bursting firecrackers and colour canisters in front of mediapersons, Lalit Jha told his interrogators.

In the end, they did not need to operationalise Plan B as Amol Shinde and Neelam Devi made it to the Parliament building, released coloured smoke from canisters, and shouted slogans around the time two others intruded into the Lok Sabha chamber from the visitors' gallery. The two others who were part of the back-up plan were identified as Mahesh and Kailash. Both are now under the Delhi Police custody.

Jha was sent to seven-day police custody by a local court on Friday. Terror charges under the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act have been slapped against Jha and the four others arrested on Wednesday.

The two trespassers into the Lok Sabha, Manorajan D and Sagar Sharma, had the picture of a fist against the backdrop of a Tricolour, a slogan in Hindi and a slogan in English on the Manipur violence issue.

Meanwhile, it emerged that Manoranjan had reportedly visited Cambodia in 2016 and was there for a year.

"He had reportedly told his family that he was going for a job, but no one knows the nature of the job or the details of his visit to that country," a source said. Manoranjan is an engineer by training.

His accomplice, Sagar Sharma, had earlier visited him in Mysuru, the source said, adding the whole plot could have been hatched in Mysuru.

Parliament paralysed

Parliament was paralysed on Friday as the Opposition kept up its protest demanding home minister Amit Shah's statement. Outside Parliament, Shah said a probe panel will submit its report in 15-20 days | P9

TIME TO CHECK OUT 'KRUTRIM AI', DESI RESPONSE TO CHATGPT

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

IN what is touted as India's answer to ChatGPT, ride-hailing firm Ola on Friday unveiled the country's first multi-lingual AI model Krutrim, which means artificial in Sanskrit.

While ChatGPT and other major AI models can respond to queries only in English, Krutrim understands as many as 22 Indian languages and can give response in 10 languages — English, Hindi, Tamil, Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi, Malayalam, Telugu, Kannada, and Odia. Ola CEO Bhavish Aggarwal claims Krutrim will be able to process more Indian languages going forward.

Bhavish Aggarwal

During the launch event, Aggarwal demonstrated how Krutrim can churn out stories and poems in Indian languages. Explaining the AI's features, he said other models are trained largely in English. Also, foreign AI models can't capture the nuances of Indian languages and culture. In this context, he said, Krutrim surpasses all others as it has been trained on unique data sets specific to the Indian scenario.

In technical terms, Krutrim is a family of large language models (LLM). It has been trained on over 2 trillion 'tokens' by a team of scientists based in Bengaluru and San Francisco. Tokens are the basic units of text or code that an LLM AI uses to process and generate language.

Krutrim will be available in two versions – the base model and Pro. The latter version will have multimodal, larger knowledge capabilities and other technical advancements for inference.

The beta version will be out in January for enterprises and developers, while Krutrim Pro is expected to be available in Q4 of FY24.

Nithyashree Venkataramanan
Playback Singer
From not being
sure about myself
to being the only
one I'm sure about.
I am becoming the girl I always wanted to be.
A feeling that deserves something truly unique.
Platinum. A metal that came from the stars
two billion years ago. Making it incredibly rare.
Celebrate the joy of being you with platinum.
Rare, precious and true. Just like you.
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